

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE &amp; SAFETY

Exhibit No. H ~~123~~ 3Date 1-16-09Bill No. H 44**Roy Brown****From:** chuckbutlr@aol.com**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2009 11:24 AM**To:** DaveLewisD@aol.com; cliff@larsenusa.com; brown.roy@bresnan.net**Subject:** Health Policy Council

Senators:

As each of you knows, over the past year, I have been actively involved in the work of the Montana Healthcare Forum, since the Forum's first conference in October '08 and as a member of the Forum's Coverage Workgroup and 2nd Annual conference held last November. The Forum's participants have included a diverse group of Montanans from all across the state and some 50 or so participants devoted considerable time to meeting in one or more of five working groups last year.

The Workgroups were chaired by Susan Witte of Allegiance/CIGNA, Dick Brown of the MHA, Tanya Ask and Tom Roberts, M.D. of the Western Montana Clinic, Claudia Clifford of AARP and Jan Van Riper of the Auditor's Office and Mike Foster of St. Vincent. Webb Brown chaired the planning group for the 2nd conference. Each of these individuals gave tirelessly of their time to see that the Forum focused on solutions to the high number of uninsured, rising medical costs and increasing insurance premiums.

(Just a bit more background on the Forum - Carroll College and BCBSMT collaborated to bring together around 250 Montanans for the 1st Annual Montana Healthcare Forum conference in October '09. That gathering resulted in 50 or so Montanans working in five groups over the past year. Sponsors of the 2nd conference included consumer and health advocacy groups, providers, insurers, business and labor!)

One of the recommendations that was developed by the Forum and given considerable thought to was the proposal for a permanent Health Policy Council of the Montana Legislature that would work with all stakeholders - consumers, providers, payers, business, labor, insurers and so on to make high-quality healthcare more accessible and affordable for ALL Montanans.

In all my years of involvement in healthcare and healthcare policy, the work of the Forum participants has been by far the best effort of a diverse group of Montanans to come together and make recommendations for both the public and private sector to reduce the number of uninsured and to make healthcare more affordable

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and accessible for ALL Montanans.

I am very proud to have been a part of the Forum over the past 15 months and to have worked with a group of folks devoted to one goal - helping their fellow Montanans! Passage of SB44 would be the culmination of a lot of hard work and be the beginning of a new chapter in solving this problem that impacts every man, woman and child in our great State.

I know Senators Lewis and Larsen have devoted considerable time in their personal and professional lives to

healthcare and Senator Brown, as chair of the committee and in your previous legislative and public service,

I know you have had longtime interest in this issue as well. Montanans are fortunate to have each of you

serving on the Senate Health Committee along with your colleagues.

Being out-of-town, this statement is submitted for the SB44 hearing record. Thank you.

chuck butler

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